

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An equipment washing machine comprising:

5 a frame, a tub rigidly mounted to said frame, a supply means for supplying washing fluid, rinsing fluid and drying air cooperating with said tub, a porous basket rotatably mounted inside said tub, said basket selectively rotatable by selective rotation means, at least one porous-sided equipment container releasably mountable into said basket, each equipment container of said at least one equipment container adapted for holding
10 flexible articles positioned within said container, by means for securing said articles, for flow of the washing and rinsing fluids and drying air therethrough and for holding the flexible articles mounted to and substantially separated from each other, and stationary relative to said container as said basket is rotated relative to said tub in the sequential presence of the washing fluid, the rinsing fluid, and the drying air.

- 15 2. The machine of claim 1 wherein said each equipment container is a clam-shell container.

- 20 3. The machine of claim 2 wherein said container includes two half-containers hinged contiguously along a common side edge, common between said two half-containers.

- 25 4. The machine of claim 3 wherein said basket has a cylindrical wall and said each equipment container is mountable into said basket so as to dispose said common side edge along and adjacent said cylindrical wall of said basket with said two half-containers diverging from said common side edge so to dispose said two half-containers adjacent said cylindrical wall.

5. The machine of claim 4 wherein each said half-container of said two half-containers is, in cross section orthogonal to said common side, a segment of a circle, so as to be generally quonset-shaped when containing said articles.

5 6. The machine of claim 5 wherein a curved surface of said each half-container corresponding to an arc bounded by a chord of said segment of a circle, is substantially conformal to an inside surface of said cylindrical wall when said container is mounted in said basket and said container contains said articles.

10 7. The machine of claim 6 wherein a flat surface of said each said half-container corresponding to said chord bounding said arc in said segment of a circle includes a rigid perimeter frame.

15 8. The machine of claim 7 wherein a flexible porous material is mounted to said frame so as to form said flat surface, and wherein said curved surface is made of said flexible porous material.

9. The machine of claim 6 wherein said each said half-container is made of rigid porous material.

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10. The machine of claim 9 wherein said rigid porous material is mounted on a rigid frame.

11. The machine of claim 10 wherein said rigid frame defines said quonset shape.

25 12. The machine of claim 6 wherein said curved surface has a releasably closable door therein for access into said container when said container is removed from said basket.

13. The machine of claim 2 wherein said clam-shell container has a vertice bisecting two clam-shell halves comprising said clam-shell container, and wherein said basket is a

cylinder having an axis of symmetry, a plurality of container supports mounted in said cylinder for holding said clam-shell container in said cylinder with said vertice adjacent a wall of said cylinder and parallel to said axis of symmetry.

5 14. The machine of claim 13 wherein said container supports include rigid members extending parallel to said axis of symmetry.

15. The machine of claim 14 wherein said container supports maintain said clam-shell halves adjacent said wall.

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16. The machine of claim 15 wherein said clam-shell container is mountable into said basket by sliding said clam-shell halves and said vertice along said rigid members in a direction parallel to said axis of symmetry.

15 17. The machine of claim 1 wherein said container is generally quonset-shaped and wherein said basket is compartmentalized to accept said container in a snug sliding fitment into a compartment of said compartmentalized basket so as to dispose said container adjacent an outer wall of said basket.

20 18. The machine of claim 17 wherein said basket is a cylinder having an axis of symmetry and said compartment disposes a curved surface of said container adjacent said outer wall.

25 19. The machine of claim 18 wherein said basket has a plurality of said compartments for holding a corresponding plurality of said containers.

20. The machine of claim 19 wherein said plurality of said compartments are radially spaced about said axis of symmetry, around said outer wall.